



Influencing best practice in breast cancer

While survival for women with breast cancer in Australia is among the highest in the world, there is evidence that not all patients are receiving the most appropriate care or getting the information they need about the options that are right for them. This unwarranted variation has the potential to have an impact on patient outcomes and experience.

About the Statement

The aim of the *Cancer Australia Statement – Influencing best practice in breast cancer* is to iron out unwarranted variations in breast cancer care in Australia.

The Statement is a summary of 12 practices that have been identified as appropriate or inappropriate for the provision of evidence-based, patient-centred breast cancer care in Australia. It highlights what 'ought to be done' in breast cancer care to maximise clinical benefit, minimise harm and deliver patient-centred care.

Not every practice will be relevant for all people diagnosed with breast cancer. The practice(s) relevant to an individual will depend on the type and stage of their breast cancer, their age, and where they are in their breast cancer journey.



HOW WAS THE STATEMENT DEVELOPED?

Cancer Australia took a highly collaborative, consultative and evidence-based approach to the development of the Statement. People with cancer were an integral part of the process, which brought key clinical and cancer organisations together with women with breast cancer to identify priority areas of practice.

USING THE STATEMENT

The Statement aims to empower people with breast cancer to engage with their health professionals and make informed, evidence-based decisions that deliver the best outcomes for them.

You may wish to talk with your health professionals about the practices in the Statement and about the options available to you.

For more information about the Statement visit canceraustralia.gov.au/statement



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Appropriate to offer a choice of either breast conserving surgery followed by radiotherapy, or a mastectomy to patients diagnosed with early breast cancer, because these treatments are equally effective in terms of survival.

WHAT THIS PRACTICE IS ABOUT

There are two operations for breast cancer; a mastectomy where the whole breast is removed, and breast conserving surgery where the breast cancer and a small area of healthy tissue around it is removed, conserving as much of the breast as possible. A course of radiotherapy is almost always recommended after breast conserving therapy.

Breast-conserving surgery followed by radiotherapy is as effective as mastectomy for most women with early breast cancer.* This means that for most women the overall survival rate is the same after either treatment.

WHY THIS PRACTICE MIGHT BE IMPORTANT TO YOU

Your decision about whether to have breast-conserving surgery followed by radiotherapy or mastectomy will depend on the characteristics of your cancer, as well as your individual circumstances and preferences. Discussing your surgical options and what they involve with your healthcare team can help you make a decision that is right for you.

MORE INFORMATION

More information about other recommended practices and the Statement is available at canceraustralia.gov.au/statement

* Early breast cancer is defined as invasive cancer that is contained in the breast, or has spread to lymph nodes in the breast or armpit, but not to other parts of the body. Some cancer cells may have spread outside the breast and armpit area but cannot be detected.

